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USU Student Organic Farm Newsletter

Plants, Soils, and Climate

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## USU Student Organic Farm

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## What's New On The Farm

**The field is almost fully planted!** Thanks to a little help from our friends at the Greenville Research Farm, we'll have squash, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and tomatillos in the ground this week, and be done with our most intensive planting! Dr. Dan Drost's team from Greenville Research Farm, James Frisby, Jewelry Anna Swensen, Christina Nolasco and Maegen Lewis, spent hours with us setting up our squash and pumpkin beds with plastic mulch and a drip irrigation system last week and this week, and we had some help with tilling and mowing from Eric Galloway and his technician, Jayden Gunnell.

## Warming up to farming in Northern Utah

**Utah's growing season** really is short. It's one thing to hear that, and another to watch an entire bed of tiny little spinach starts bolt - go to seed - a week after planting them, just because of one week of warm temperatures! It takes some planning to grow an abundant harvest of cool-season crops. The hoop houses are the reason your baskets are so abundant right now. We'll remove the plastic and throw shade cloth over them now that it's warming up outside, and will hopefully be able to keep harvesting delicious greens from there through June as the field catches up! We're all really interested to learn more about veggie varieties, infrastructure and thermodynamics to become more innovative about season extension.

## Field Notes

**Melanie** This past week has been very educational. I learned about watering the field, fertilizing with fish residues, which plants can be group together when planting them, how to identify weeds, etc. A pleasant surprise was the joy harvesting brings. The challenge I faced was watering in general, how to do it and for how long. That's a very important part of the process as well as the regulating the intensity of the sun for plants to survive, of course.

**Lara** I'm blown away by how much can be accomplished in 6 hours. We usually start at 7 am and work until 1:30 or so, and every day as we close up the shed, I look out at the field and cannot believe it has only been one day. We're learning something new and profound every day, and it's rewarding to see our work accumulate into a functioning little farming operation. My biggest challenge is patience; I also watch the field every day and wonder why the plants are the same size they were yesterday.







**Brooke** It's been two weeks since the start of this internship and I am so grateful to have the opportunity to learn through the tasks we perform and the conversations with my coworkers that inform and inspire me. I am starting to conceptualize the farming process here through the lens of preparing for bi-weekly harvests. At this point, I'm taking lots of notes!

I found it tough at first to adjust to the sun exposure. Watering the field by myself for the first time was also a

challenge which involved trying not to drag the hose across the plants we had just transplanted from the greenhouse! I've been thankful for my coworkers for helping me to laugh and find joy during all kinds of tasks (I didn't know I could laugh so much working in the rain and mud!). I've also enjoyed interacting with our CSA members during pick-up and getting to know the people we're feeding. I'm really looking forward to watching the farm grow and change throughout the season!

**Camilla** These last couple of weeks I have learned a lot about weed management. I now understand a bit more about what makes weeds grow faster and how to keep them at bay. A difficulty we had was with planting our transplants deep enough. We had a few - more than a few - casualties because we planted too shallow, and had to replant a bunch of them. One thing that surprised me was the amount of leafy greens we were able to harvest for our first CSA shares. I didn't pay any attention to how big our lettucess were getting until our first harvest. They were so big and beautiful!

## Constraints vs. Limitations

"Limitations are what unimaginative people bring to looking at constraints. For a professional, the most important kind of creativity is brilliant responses to wicked constraints. Constraints are the finger holes you use to climb the problem."

*- Henry Beers*

Landscape Architect Henry Beers was the final speaker in the USU Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning Department Speaker Series this year





## What's In The Basket

Asian cabbage that makes a mean stir-fry and beet greens are a new addition this week.

### Greens while they last!

**Spinach and Kale** - Wait til you try these fresh from the farm!

**Green Lettuce (Black Seeded Simpson)** - a "buttercrunch" lettuce that is so juicy and delicious!

**Mizuna** - Mizuna is that spiky green. We love this stuff, it is a workhorse of the spring garden. It comes back fast after being harvested, and it quickly regains crunchiness if it's put into water after harvest. It's so tasty, too!

**Tatsoi** - a tender, flavorful Asian cabbage that is excellent sauteed on its own or added to soups and stir-fries

**Cilantro and Parsley** - Such a happy plant! We're glad it grows quickly and abundantly, some of our field plants haven't fared well and we're going to re-seed this week to give them another chance.

**Beet Greens** - Maybe we harvested these a little early! They're so delicious. We'll wait for a larger harvest in the next round, but hope you enjoy these sweet babies.

## Un-RECIPE FOR

Mizuna and Tatsoi  
Stir-fry

An Un-Recipe offers guidelines to create delicious dishes based on the way ingredients, kitchen tools and cooks interact in the kitchen. Email us with questions!

### INGREDIENTS:

1 lb firm or extra firm tofu  
2 Tbsp oil  
1 large onion, quartered and sliced thin  
1-2 tsp grated fresh ginger  
1 med clove garlic, sliced thin  
1 bunch mizuna (or other dark green), thick stems removed and large leaves chopped  
1 bunch tatsoi  
3 Tbsp soy or teriyaki sauce to taste

### DIRECTIONS:

Cut tofu into 1/2" thick slices. Blot between tea towels, then cut into 1/2" cubes.  
Heat 1 Tbsp oil in wok or wide skillet.  
Add the tofu and stir fry over medium high heat until golden on most sides.  
Remove to plate.  
Heat 1 Tbsp oil in same skillet.  
Add onion, garlic and saute until golden.  
Add ginger and greens and stir fry until leaves are wilted.  
Stir in the tofu and soy sauce.  
Serve at once.  
You may substitute any other greens in this recipe!

